

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
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SUBJECT: JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING

1. SUMMARY. SECOND INDO-US JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING WAS SUCCESS DESPITE REDUCED INDIAN DELEGATION AND PRESIDENT AHMED'S DEATH. BOTH US AND INDIAN DELEGATIONS APPRECIATED HIGH LEVEL USG INTEREST AND HOSPITALITY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FEB 14-15 INDO-US JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING WENT WELL DESPITE THE ABSENCE OF SEVERAL KEY INDIAN
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MEMBERS AND THE SHADOW CAST BY PRESIDENT AHMED'S DEATH. BOTH AMERICAN AND INDIAN MEMBERS CONSIDERED THIS MEETING MORE CONSTRUCTIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE THAN LAST YEAR'S INAUGURAL AND JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS. THE INDIANS SAID THE AMERICANS ARE BEGINNING TO LISTEN; THE AMERICANS FOR THEIR PART WERE MORE PLAIN SPOKEN. IN ONE SHARP EXCHANGE ON INVESTMENT CLIMATE,

THE INDIANS ASKED WHAT THE AMERICANS REALLY CONSIDERED NECESSARY FOR INVESTMENT. THE AMERICAN RESPONSE WAS THAT THEY WANTED THE SAME TREATMENT AS INDIAN INVESTORS. SEVERAL INDIAN DELEGATES TOLD DEPARTMENT OFFICER THAT THEY APPRECIATED THIS KIND OF REALISTIC EXCHANGE.

3. INDIAN EMBASSY MINISTER DIXIT AND SEVERAL INDIAN DELEGATES CALLED ON ACTING SPECIAL TRADE REPRESENTATIVE ALAN WOLFF ON FEB 10. A DAY LATER THE INDIAN DELEGATION LEADERSHIP, ACCOMPANIED BY DIXIT, MADE A BRIEF CALL ON UNDER SECRETARY-DESIGNATE COOPER. AMBASSADOR SINGH, GOVERNOR FREEMAN, DIXIT AND SIX MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION ALSO HAD A GOOD 30-MINUTE MEETING WITH COMMERCE SECRETARY KREPS ON FEBRUARY 16, FOLLOWED BY DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY KATZ AND BIC DIRECTOR SHAW. THE TALKS WITH THESE COMMERCE OFFICIALS CENTERED ON GSP, ITC ACTIONS ON SHOE AND SUGAR IMPORTS AND THE INDIAN DESIRE FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO US MARKET. THE INDIANS PARTICULARLY APPRECIATED OPPORTUNITY TO MEET SECRETARY KREPS. THAT MEETING WAS PRECEDED BY A CAPITOL HILL BREAKFAST WITH CONGRESSMEN FRASER, IRELAND AND DERRICK AND A DOZEN STAFFERS.

4. ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR SINGH CANCELED HIS FEB 14 DINNER BECAUSE OF PRESIDENT AHMED'S DEATH, BOTH THE INDIAN AND AMERICAN DELEGATIONS HOSTED LUNCHESES ATTENDED BY INDIAN EMBASSY AND USG OFFICIALS. ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY SOBER AND GOVERNOR FREEMAN CO-HOSTED A DINNER AT THE DEPARTMENT'S BENJAMIN FRANKLIN ROOM FEB 15. ALTHOUGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AMBASSADOR SINGH WAS ABSENT BECAUSE OF OFFICIAL MOURNING, INDIAN EMBASSY MINISTER VENKATESWARAN, DIXIT AND BAIJAL ATTENDED. THE INDIANS WERE PARTICULARLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT DINNER. BOTH SIDES APPEAR TO HAVE LEFT WASHINGTON HAPPY, DESCRIBING THE MEETINGS AS USEFUL AND SUCCESSFUL, AND EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR USG HOSPITALITY AND INTEREST.

5. FEB 15 PRESS CONFERENCE WAS ATTENDED BY INDIAN PRESS REPS AND VOA BUT NO US JOURNALISTS. IN A JOINT COMMUNIQUE, TRANSMITTED SEPTTEL, IT WAS AGREED THAT THE JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WOULD MEET IN THE US IN SEPTEMBER 1977 WITH THE THIRD JOINT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN INDIA IN FEBRUARY 1978. INDIAN DELEGATION HAS GONE ON TO NEW YORK AND CHICAGO FOR ADDITIONAL MEETINGS.
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